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Children Of The Mind (Ender)



Synopsis

In the conclusion of the Ender saga, Ender Wiggin confronts his ultimate challenge when his adopted world, Lusitania, is threatened by his old planet-destroying weapon, and his ally, Jane, is about to be killed off by the Starways Congress. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (676 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #16,086,583 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #69 inÂ Books > Books on CD > Authors, A-Z > (C) > Card, Orson Scott #16179 inÂ Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction > Hard Science Fiction

Customer Reviews

Having read and loved the first three books in the Ender series, there was no way I was going to miss this entry. Like so many others, though, I am of split mind about the finale (and how appropriate, given the schizophrenic existence of its lead characters Ender-Peter and Val-Jane). While "Children of the Mind" does contain Card's trademark wit and while the last 100 pages kick into high gear, the final installment, on its own, is as unsatisfying as it is pleasing. One of the major problems is Card's ill-considered decision to publish "Xenocide" and "Children of the Mind" as two books rather than one cohesive unit; the fourth entry seems more an epilogue to the series--a 350-page denouement--than the climax it should have been. Card admits he originally planned the two books as one work, and this admission resonates like an apology. Well over a third of "Children of the Mind" summarizes what happened in previous volumes, and another third is riddled with endless conversations on political and metaphysical topics, many of which the characters already debated at length in "Xenocide." Only in the last 100 pages does Card finally abandon the themes that were presented more thoroughly (and competently) in the earlier books and turn his attention to resolving the many loose ends. In sum, Card would have been much wiser to have written a unified 600-page book rather than 900 needlessly repetitive pages. The second problem is that Card's philosophical ruminations often steer awfully close to quasi-religious mumbo-jumbo. The entire

section set on Pacifica, a planet governed by Samoans, feels particularly incongruous. (Peter and Wang-mu wonder aloud--twice--what they are doing on this particular world, a question that is never really fully addressed.

About halfway through "Children of the Mind" I realized that I hated it. With a passion. Anything that evokes so much passion can't be worthless. That's why I'm giving it 3 stars. If you loved the first three books as much as I did, you may similarly feel a strong emotion when you read this one. It's not exactly boring. I just felt like I was in another universe trying to understand what in the world Card was doing. Why do I hate it so much? Because the characters are all varying degrees of unsympathetic, and all of the major action surrounds Card's weird new mysticism, rather than the intense ethical dilemmas of the previous books. This book is like the opposite of the other books and I couldn't understand why. No one is rational, no one is wise, no one has any empathy at all. The spirit of Ender Wiggin doesn't exist in this book. No, Ender isn't really present in this book. Card would like you to believe that he is, in the form of Peter and Valentine, Ender's "children of the mind", but I found those characters frustrating and unbelievable and not at all like any side of Ender. Interestingly, they could be viable characters on their own, but Card insists on treating them as if they are not real people and we should not care what happens to them (especially Young Valentine who is subjected to extreme emotional torture but we're not supposed to care about her feelings, she's just an "empty vessel"). No strong characters rise up to replace the absence of Ender. Card tries, with Miro (who becomes loathsome in my opinion) and Peter (all the fun sociopathy drained out of him). With the exception of Wang-Mu, all of the female characters come off looking really bad. You'll wonder why Ender married Novinha, as awful, self-centered and destructive as she is.

Talk about pretentious -- in the afterword to Children of the Mind, Orson Scott Card compares himself to Nobel Prize winning author Kenzaburo Oe. And that really illustrates the problems not only with this latest novel, but the problem of the Ender series, in general. Card is so taken with moral and character dilemmas that he gives short shrift to the actual plot of the story. It might be acceptable if Card had the craft and skill of good "mainstream" author, but he is so heavy-handed that his attempts at literary depth are embarrassing. Ender's Game was a great novel because Card did a magnificent job of compression; the result was a taut, gripping and moving story. Speaker For The Dead was a very good novel because the main plot involving the mystery of piggy culture and biology was strong enough to carry the reader past the bland soap opera of the Portuguese biologist's family. But the third novel, Xenocide, completely collapsed under its weight, and C! children

of the Mind -- after starting with what is admittedly a touching scene with Ender and his wife in the monastery -- dissolves into a mess. Any interesting plot flow that might have moved the book forward stops dead every time -- and there are many of them -- Mr. Card yields to his didactic side and inserts a boring, almost expository, conversation about the meaning of reality. Mr. Card also continues another unfortunate trend that began in Speaker For the Dead, as he again speculates on how different ethnic cultures might handle space colonization.

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